4. Plan of Address.—Addressing, as I do, the Assembly for the first time, I propose to take stock of the administration and to outline roughly the future policy and in doing this I shall incidentally mention what has been done in these directions since I took charge about eight months ago. Travancore has been fortunate in the possession of an uninterrupted succession of able Dewans, and I need hardly say that each one of them has, in his time, contributed his share to the improvement of the administration of the State. Yet it is only a truism to state that, but for the rare foresight and the ripe wisdom of His Highness the Maha Raja, the marvellous co-ordination of the beneficent activities of the several Dewans, whose ideals and view-points must necessarily differ, would have been utterly impossible, and the State would not have been able to achieve that steady progress which is its proud possession to-day. It is therefore in a spirit of reverential humility that I attempt to make a survey of the present situation, and with the help of the fresh experiences we have learnt from the momentous changes in ideals and outlook on life that are so rapidly taking place around us, examine the various problems that confront us for solution and endeavour to solve them in a manner suited to modern conditions and requirements.

5. Subjects of Survey.—The domain of administrative activities that I now propose to survey may be conveniently grouped under the following four main heads, *viz.*, (1) the development of the resources of the State and the promotion of the material and moral well-being of the people; (2) the enhancement of the efficiency of the administration; (3) the satisfaction of the civic, political and social aspirations of the people and the removal of inequalities of opportunities for self-advancement among them; and (4) the improvement of the finances of the State.

DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES AND PROMOTION OF MATERIAL AND MORAL WELL-BEING.

6. Assignment of Land.—Agriculture is and must remain for a long time to come the staple industry of Travancore, as of the rest of India. It follows then that the paramount duty of the State is to promote this industry on the right lines and by every means in its power. Agricultural prosperity depends as much on a well-designed scheme of land-assignment calculated to bring about an equitable distribution of agrarian holdings, as on the regularity of the seasons or the efficiency of the measures calculated to increase the output or minimise the dangers arising from floods and other visitations. It is with a view to achieving this object that the revision of the rules regarding the assignment of lands has been taken in hand by me, and the revised rules, in their draft stage, have been published for the criticism of the public. It is also with the same object that the Land Assignment Bill has been introduced in the Legislative Council. Government are not unaware of the adverse criticisms that have been directed against the draft Puduval Rules or of the still stronger opposition to which the draft Land Assignment Bill has been subjected, but Government would venture to state that a good deal of this criticism and opposition is based on an erroneous understanding of the subject and that nothing is farther from the intention of the Government than the creation of facilities to the outsider for the exploitation of land in Travancore or the erection of legal barriers against the reasonable remedies obtainable by the private citizen against the wanton misuse of the powers vested in revenue officials. In emphasising the policy of sale of lands for value in conveniently small blocks, by public auction or otherwise, Government are only following a procedure that has the sanction of long standing usage in this as well as in the neighbouring State of Cochin, and the main object which Government have in view in promulgating the two new measures is the protection of the ignorant ryot from the wily exploiter and the unscrupulous capitalist and to bring him on his feet, for the ultimate benefit of the country, of the industrious dependant and the unfortunate landless. Government hope to issue these measures in their final form with the necessary modifications, after a careful consideration of the several objections raised against them.

7. Land Records.—In an attempt to improve the conditions of agricultural industry, a proper system of survey and land records is only a matter of comparatively a short period of years.

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to a well-regulated procedure in regard to land assignment. Although in the past the whole State has undergone a survey and a portion of it has even been resurveyed, and although a system of land records maintenance was introduced some years back, the survey is now found to be very imperfect and often erroneous and quite out of date and the maintenance of land records is an altogether neglected chapter in the administrative history of the State. In very many cases demarcation stones only exist in name and where they do really exist they rarely conform to proper description and size and are seldom in the right places and the State and the private citizen do not know their respective limits. Lands whose reservation for communal purposes has received the sanction of Government have been freely encroached upon, and vast areas of land not yet assigned are either in the enjoyment of private individuals or are not found in the lists of lands recognised to be available for assignment. To rectify this state of affairs which is alike unsatisfactory to the ryot and detrimental to governmental revenues and communal interests and which is very largely the result of the ignorance of survey on the part of responsible revenue officers and the absence of method and organisation in the work of the expert survey officers, measures have been adopted for imparting a working knowledge of survey and maintenance of land records to a body of young men selected from the services for their good work and good educational qualifications and for sending them to the taluks to rectify errors in survey, clear all arrears in sub-division work, relieve the Tahsildars of the largely routine, though very important, work of effecting *pokkuvaravu* (patta transfer) and give them all the local help required for the right disposal of land. These officers will also detect all encroachments on communal *porambokes* and other Government lands and take the necessary steps for having them registered, if such registry is unobjectionable, or vacated if the occupations on them are objectionable. These responsible and trained officers, who have been styled Assistant Tahsildars, will thus relieve Tahsildars of a substantial share of their work and enable the latter to devote their attention better to their other multifarious duties and they will prepare the ground in a couple of years for the conduct of the resettlement which is already overdue in some taluks and is very necessary for the removal of the existing glaring inequalities in the incidence of assessment and the simplification of the highly complex system of land tenures now prevalent in the country. The first batch of these officers has already been trained and fifteen of them have been posted to a corresponding number of taluks. The training of the second batch has just commenced. Other questions connected with land revenue reform, such as the writing up of the land revenue registers which are now very imperfect and out of date and the adoption of measures for the early automatic settlement of the land revenue demand of the year soon after its close, the translation into the vernaculars of the more important portions of the Land Revenue Manual for the convenience of the public, the adjustment of the territorial limits of *pakuthies* by the bifurcation of the too unwieldy and the amalgamation of the too small, the simplification of the accounts and registers to be maintained in the *pakuthi* cutcherries, the freeing of Tahsildars from magisterial and other work to enable them to do their revenue work with undivided attention and with greater promptitude and thoroughness, are engaging the attention of Government.

8. Irrigation.—The next point that claims our attention in relation to the agriculture is irrigation. It is common knowledge that there is no unlimited scope for the extension of irrigation in Travancore. The only possible irrigation scheme of considerable magnitude, *viz.*, the Kodayar Project, has already been completed. It is however, a matter for regret that the ryots who own lands commanded by the State channels have been very slow in availing themselves of the benefits of the scheme and that there are over 10,000 acres of land still remaining to be converted. It is possible to remove the obstacles that might lie in the way of the conversion of lands and to go to the ryots to afford encouragement, both by advice and money advances, to enable them to go ahead in the work of conversion, and to take effective steps for the acquisition of waste, and lands required for communal purposes—a matter lost sight of in the past—necessitates the appointment of a special officer, possessing adequate local knowledge, has been appointed, and much good will result from his labours. The only other irrigation project of any magnitude is the one known as the Atirapalli Project across the

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